

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated October 18, 2007, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration.

I. **Allowed/Allowable Claims**

Applicants note with appreciation that claims 71-72, 74-79, 81-92, 95-125, 166-173 and 335-341 are allowed. Additionally, claims 324-330 are indicated as reciting allowable subject matter, and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

To expedite allowance of this application, Applicants have canceled claims 61, 64, 68, 237, 244, 246 and 324 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants also have amended independent claim 323 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 324, and have cancelled claim 324. Dependent claims 325-327 and 329 have been amended to adjust their dependencies based on the cancellation of claim 324.

In view of the foregoing, claims 71-72, 74-79, 81-92, 95-125, 166-173, 323, and 325-341 are pending, with claims 71, 166, 323, 335 and 337 being independent claims. The application as now presented is believed to be in allowable condition.

II. **Claim Rejections**

Claims 61, 68, 237, 244, 246, 323, and 323-334 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,946,209 ("Eckel"). Applicants respectfully disagree with these rejections. In any case, these rejections are now moot in view of the claim cancellations and amendments noted above. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more related applications directed to the subject matter of the canceled claims and/or the claims as pending prior to the amendments herein.

III. Information Disclosure Statements

Applicants note that the following Information Disclosure Statements (IDSs) have been filed in the present application and are available on PAIR; however, to date Applicants have not received any confirmation that these IDSs have been considered by the Examiner:

- June 29, 2007 (first listed reference to JP 2000-17383, "Matsushita")
- May 25, 2007 (first listed reference to "Tyrrel")
- December 4, 2006 (first listed reference to "Kerr")
- October 16, 2006 (GB 2354602A)
- September 12, 2006 (co-pending applications)
- January 19, 2006 (first listed reference to "Kawashima")
- May 20, 2004 (first listed reference to "Tokunaga")

Applicants respectfully request that, in the next Office communication, the Examiner confirms (e.g., via initialed PTO Forms-1449) that each of the above-identified IDSs has been fully considered in connection with the pending claims.

CONCLUSION

Nothing in this paper should be construed as intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify any concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

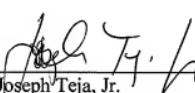
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicants' representative at the telephone number indicated below to discuss any outstanding issues relating to the allowability of the application.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: November 6, 2007

By:


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